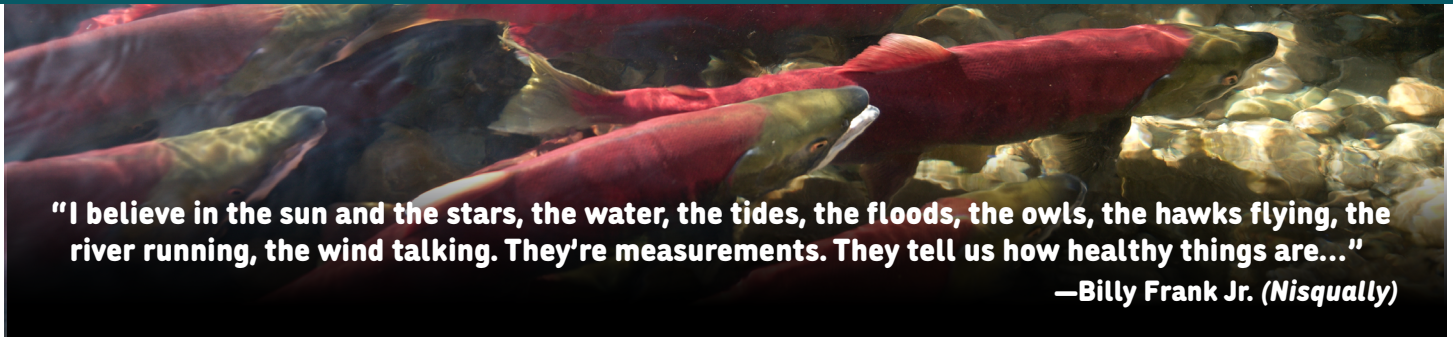


Washington Tracking Network and Tribes:

Pathways to Improve the Environmental Health Disparities Map



"I believe in the sun and the stars, the water, the tides, the floods, the owls, the hawks flying, the river running, the wind talking. They're measurements. They tell us how healthy things are..."

—Billy Frank Jr. (Nisqually)

Brief Background

The Washington Tracking Network's (WTN) [Environmental Health Disparities \(EHD\) map](#) is an interactive tool that shows the cumulative impacts of 25 health and environmental indicators at the census tract level. The map was developed through a partnership between community organizations, the Department of Health (DOH), and academia. Updates are made via Tribal and community engagement and science, in alignment with staffing and data availability.

After the map's release in 2019, several environmental justice focused state laws referenced the EHD map as a tool for state agencies to identify overburdened communities. The term "overburdened communities" describes communities who are experiencing more impacts from environmental and social issues. "Overburdened" may not be how communities identify their experience; we use this term because it is the term used within the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) and Climate Commitment Acts (CCA).

The [HEAL Act](#) made several changes to how the EHD map is developed and maintained. It gave DOH the responsibility to update and maintain the EHD map. The HEAL Act also requires DOH to offer formal Tribal consultation and collaboration on updates to the map. Our engagement with Tribes in Spring 2023 informed a commitment to ongoing engagement and contributed to some of the updates reflected in EHD map version 3.0.

The HEAL Act and the Climate Commitment Act (CCA) reference the EHD Map as a tool to support state agencies in advancing environmental justice and meeting funding requirements. Some environmental laws reference the EHD map as a tool state agency could use to help allocate funding, resources, and further engagement. Through Under the CCA, state agencies are required to allocate a minimum of 35 percent of expenditures to overburdened communities, while the HEAL Act establishes a goal of increasing that investment to 40 percent.

Working with Tribes and community to make the map better

WTN invites Tribal partners to continue collaborating to improve the map by better reflecting Tribal priorities, values, and concerns.

WTN is committed to supporting Tribal data sovereignty and following through on the commitments we make through Tribal consultation to update and maintain the EHD map. We accept feedback at any point and held listening sessions in the summer of 2025 as required by HEAL. As a result of our consultation and collaboration, so far, we are:

- Adding features, such as Tribal lands automatically populate the map, which the transition to ESRI GIS made easier to do.
- Modifying the calculation and application of existing indicators to be more protective and more reflective of Washington-specific conditions.
- Clarifying our guidance and within the too; for state agencies that Tribal lands must be considered within highly prioritized, termed "overburdened communities in some EJ laws.

Updates and Future Development

Tribal collaboration and community engagement has led to a list of topics that we are working on so that the map better reflects Environmental Justice. We understand that many of the topics mentioned below are culturally sensitive and require ongoing relationship building, increased communications, and continued support for data sovereignty. Version 3.0 of the EHD map is scheduled to be released early in 2026. We are preparing to add seven new indicators to the EHD rankings, for a total of 25 indicators and 27 overlays, which are features that can be turned on.

We welcome input on both published and unpublished topics and some indicators currently under development reflect Tribal and community input. This is vital for making the map better.

Topics that will be included or updated in draft version 3.0

- Air quality-related respiratory disease
- Community retail food environment
- Digital infrastructure
- Lead risk from housing (update)
- Low birth weight (update)
- Ozone concentration (update)
- Pesticide exposure
- PM 2.5 concentration (update)
- Population with disability
- Proximity to risk management sites (update)
- Proximity to hazardous waste and Superfund sites (update)
- Risk from diesel and other air toxics (update)
- Waste water discharge (update)
- Water quality
- Wildfire smoke exposure

Topics raised through Tribal and community input that require additional exploration before potential inclusion:

- Climate change
- Air traffic pollution
- First foods
- Health care access
- Water topics

Feedback, collaboration, and consultation

We are happy to hear from you to learn how the map could serve you better. If you have questions, concerns, want to offer input, or are interested in participating in a working group on how to improve the EHD map, please let us know. We anticipate attending Tribal forums and offering workshops culminating in Tribal consultation if requested while continuing to make updates and build relationships. We are also increasing engagement with community and overall seeking increased representation from the communities that are leading on Environmental and Climate Justice.

We are available to consult with you on how to use the map or participate in feedback. The new [HEAL Act capacity grant program](#) is administered by DOH can be used as a funding source for Tribal staff's time to engage with us on this work.

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